

MARDI GRAS SLAYING

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11/4/68

Jury Is Chosen In Murder Trial

Jury selection in the murder trial of two motorcycle gangmen, indicted for the Mardi Gras slaying of a 24-year-old Georgia engineer, was completed shortly before noon today in Judge Frank J. Shea's section of Criminal District Court.

TWELVE JURORS and one alternate were selected quickly as the trial began.

The two men, James "Bulldog" Cripps, 20, of Mt. Pleasant, Mich., and Larry "Rat" Purkey, 20, of Seymour, Ind., are accused of the Feb. 26 murder of Taylor West McLaurin Jr., a native of Charleston, W. Va.

McLaurin's bruised and badly decomposed body was found floating in the City Park lagoon by two young boys March 7.

Cripps and Purkey were arrested March 13. Both of the men told police they were members of a national motorcycle gang—"The Flying Axmen."

Reportedly, the two men admitted at the time of their arrest participation in McLaurin's death.

A third man, 20-year-old Danny Arthur Franklin, also has been charged with murder in connection with the

case. He will be tried separately.

FRANKLIN WAS arrested June 21 by San Diego police in connection with a stolen car charge.

In his opening statements to the jury, Assistant District Attorney Alvin B. Oser asked for the death penalty for both men.

Oser told the jury that the state will show Cripps and Purkey met McLaurin in a French Quarter bar and talked him into driving them to City Park, where Purkey allegedly grabbed McLaurin from behind with a "German death lock" while Cripps beat him about the face, shortly after midnight Feb. 27.

THE ASSISTANT DA said the two robbed McLaurin's body of \$40 and threw it into the lagoon, where it was dis-

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FOUR

Trial--

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covered almost a week later.

Oser said he will introduce a coroner's report showing McLaurin died of massive head injuries.

Defending Cripps is Attorney Edward G. Koch Jr. and defending Purkey is John Ciolino.

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